



Film Series: Global Queer Migrations

Series Brief

In [The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America](#) (2009), Margot Canaday analyzes Ellis Island records and finds that immigration officers often watched for “striking peculiarities in dress, talkativeness, witticism, facetiousness ... unnatural actions, mannerisms, and other eccentricities” – all to exclude immigrants who might be “sexually degenerate” and likely to become public charges. Sexuality has long affected migration patterns and concepts of nationhood and citizenship, yet queer migrants remain conveniently shrouded from public policy and media – relegated, instead, to underground railroads and closed court cases. So what happens when we give our attention to these stories? Who is the queer migrant, and what legacies, futures, and possibilities do their stories reveal?

In this film series, we will question what is both unique and universal about queer migrants’ experiences all across the world. From asylum seekers to first-generation immigrants, from social recluses in Brazil to trans performers in Finnish ballrooms, we will de-center pity for huddled masses, and instead give our attention to a range of voices who dance across genders, identities, geographies, and systems of oppression. As we interpret and absorb the social contexts surrounding these films, we hope this film series will also push you to build authentic relationships with one another and the films’ subjects – with the goal of implementing actions, campaigns, or lifestyle choices that support queer migrants in our communities and beyond.

Series Philosophy

“The term *queer* acknowledges that all identity categories are burdened by legacies that must be interrogated, do not map neatly across time and space, and become transformed through circulation within specific, unequally situated local, regional, national, and transnational circuits.”

– Eithne Luibhéid, “Queer/Migration: An Unruly Body of Scholarship” (2008)

The healing and growth that can occur when one is *finally* seen is undeniable. We will make space for these acknowledgements, but this film series is increasingly interested in these films’ contributions beyond representation and visibility. What’s in the story? What narratives are being prioritized, critiqued, and analyzed? We are interested in pulling at the roots of the problems and issues that afflict queer migrants (and us) in 2021. We are interested in being radical.

As a starting point, we will be interrogating the meaning of each word in the series' title:

- **Global:** So much soft power rests in the U.S.'s ability to export its media, and globalization has both been a source of “progress” and amplified oppression. In curating this series, we took a decidedly non-U.S.-centric approach and wanted to explore what ‘migration’ – in its most literal sense – can look like without the U.S. as the predetermined destination. However, as Studio ATAO is based on Turtle Island / on U.S. territory, it behooves us to consider how we can use our global learnings in our local context. What does transnational solidarity look like when applied to our own lives in major American metropolitan areas? What parallels can be drawn between various regimes and systems of power across the world?
- **Queer:** As Professor of Women/Gender Studies Eithne Luibheid wrote in the quote above, *queer* is not only a marker of identity – but an analytical framework. When we refer to “queer,” it is worth clarifying that we mean it as adjective and verb. “Queer” migrants may very much refer to those who identify along the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, and most of our protagonists and directors in the series thus far are indeed queer in this sense. However, as Eithne Luibheid and other scholars such as Martin Manalansan have long wondered, what happens when we apply a queer perspective onto migration, and destabilize what we know and believe of migration?
- **Migration:** Both queerness and migration are inherently fluid categories. Similar to *queer*, we take migration to refer to both literal and psychic processes. A lot of our discussions will likely revolve around migrating across borders, and all the baggage that that process involves. However, what kind of mental shifts and migrations do our protagonists – and must we – make? What migrations and dis/translocations happen even if we are not physically moving somewhere? How do we move toward collective action?
- **Film:** As much as people are interested, we are also interested in understanding what it means to use *film* as a medium to explore these issues. Once again, beyond mere visibility, how do films tell and preclude certain stories from being told? Are there “better” ways to tell certain stories? What does global cinema do differently than US cinema?

While your co-moderators have thought extensively about these questions, this series is for **all of you**. It is meant to be driven by you and your collective interests. We want to know what intrigued you, what made you laugh, what made you cry or wince – not only to rant about our favorite moments, but to understand how we can also channel these emotions and affects to *the work*. Through this process, we invite you to send us your questions, and to allow this series to be a space to work through complicated thoughts – personal, relational, societal, etc.

Per the Studio's philosophy, our hope is to end this series with not only catharsis and knowledge but an energy to act. Studio ATAO is not interested in pontificating or theorizing; rather, we firmly believe that with an expansive education, we will develop the tools for further action and movement. We will also aim to orient our conversations toward this at all times.

Series Co-Moderators / Developers

Edric Huang (he/him) is a native and typical New Yorker, doing too much all the time. He is involved in various activist, humanitarian, and community-based efforts, both locally (in Brooklyn) and globally (in the Middle East & beyond), with a focus on climate and migrant justice. As Studio ATAO's Head of Programs and inaugural movie club moderator, he strives to cultivate liberatory and community-centric spaces that encourage people to act in authentic, critical, and meaningful ways. He spends his free time writing poems, dancing, and watching yet another Asian drama.

Tonilyn A. Sideco (they/he) is a proud booty-shaking genderqueer love warrior. The fourth child of Filipino immigrants, Toni was born and raised in San Francisco's Sunset District and is now a Brooklyn & SF-based writer, director and creative educator for both stage and film. With their BA in Sociology with a minor in Women's Studies from UCLA and a MFA in Theater & Film, Toni has 20 years experience in the non-profit sector and public school system as a counselor, case manager and creative healing program coordinator and educator working with queer youth and elders and young people of color. Co-host of First Person PBS, a show about queer community and resilience, Toni also teaches queer history through the PBS Learning digital platform and has taught Creative Technologies at the New School while also facilitating their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion trainings for both students and staff. Utilizing the arts, media and storytelling as a tool for activism and social change, Toni focuses on amplifying the voices and experiences of queer people of color through stage and narrative film.

Film List:

Please [reference this document](#) for a list of all the films (currently) in the series!

Series Schedule + Description

*For each session, we have curated a series of additional readings, resources, and media for you to enjoy and further your understanding of the topic. There is only so much we can cover in the moderated conversations, so as part of our gift and labor for you, we wanted to make sure we created a fuller picture of the topic of queer migration + filmmaking for you. That being said, **there is no expectation that you read or even skim everything on this list!** We may reference some of the works in the moderated conversations (or not). Plus, it gave us an excuse to do some additional research :)*

Session 0: Defining Ambitions

Films: None

Meet your fellow film series participants and set community guidelines with one another! Afterward, we will introduce the impetus for this film series and introduce the core questions that we hope to explore through the film series. In the additional resources attached to this session, we've included two manifestos written by various coalitions of queer/migrant justice advocates in the U.S., to introduce the element of *action* and *activism*. How have others come together in the past to fight for queer migrants' rights? Whose shoulders do we stand on as hopeful activists and global citizens?

Resources:

- Queers for Economic Justice: [Queers & Immigration: A Vision Statement \(2007\)](#)
- HAVOQ: [Undoing Borders: A Queer Manifesto \(2011\)](#)
- Morgan Bassichis & Dean Spade: [Queer Necropolitics, Ch 9: Queer Politics and Anti-Blackness](#)
- Harsha Walia: [Confronting the Long Arc of U.S. Border Policy](#)
- Karl Schoonover & Rosalind Galt: [Queer Cinema in the World, Introduction](#)

Session 1: Seeking Asylum While Queer

Films: *Welcome to Chechnya* (2020, dir. David France), *Marco* (2019, dir. Saleem Haddad)

- ****Content Warning for *Welcome to Chechnya*: violence, mentions of suicide and sexual assault**

What does it mean to be a queer asylum seeker? What is both unique and universal about this particular experience of escape? In this session, we will discuss the emotional, legal, and bureaucratic webs that engulf asylum seekers as they pursue a more equitable elsewhere. *Welcome to Chechnya* provides an informative albeit heavy entrypoint to understand the journey of asylum. Meanwhile, *Marco* pushes back against sympathy as well as a dangerous tendency toward homonationalism or gay imperialism. What systems must these queer migrants navigate – and why are these systems established the way they are? How do we stand in solidarity with queer asylum seekers?

Resources:

On Asylum:

- Immigration Equality: [Asylum Manual](#) (Just read the “A Brief History” Section!)
- JD Shadel, *them*: [Inside America’s Mass Detention of LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers](#)
- Danny Deza, *Narratively*: [Where LGBTQ War Refugees Finally Feel Safe](#)
- Johannes Lukas Gartner: [\(In\)credibly Queer: Sexuality-Based Asylum in the EU](#)
- Thomas Wilmark: [Homemaking and Perpetual Liminality among Queer Refugees](#)
- Amy Shuman, Wendy Hesford: [Getting Out: Asylum, Sexual Minorities, Privileged Visibility](#)
- IGLA [Sexual Orientation Laws 2019 Map](#)
- Matt Baume: [Chechnya's Gay Purge is Escalating. The US Has Done Almost Nothing to Help.](#)
- *Welcome to Chechnya* [Impact Campaign](#)
 - I would also note the organizations they partnered with on the campaign/film, such as [Rainbow Railroad](#).
- Shahram Khosravi: [“Illegal” Traveller: An Autoethnography of Borders](#)

On Homonationalism / Gay Imperialism:

- Jasbir Puar: [Homonationalism as Assemblage: Viral Travels, Affective Sexualities](#)
 - Puar references her own book, [Terrorist Assemblages \(2007\)](#)
- Scott Lauria Morgensen: [Settler Homonationalism](#)
- Haley D. O’Shaughnessy: [Homonationalism and the Death of the Radical Queer](#)
- Johanna Rothe: [On the Censorship of the First Queerness/Raciality Collection in Britain](#)
- Patrick Henningsen: [Smart Power and the Human Rights Industrial Complex](#)

On Technology at the “Borders”:

- [Why ‘Welcome to Chechnya’ Used Deepfake to Protect Their Subjects](#) (Variety)
- [How VFX Supervisor Ryan Laney Developed Game-Changing Technology For ‘Welcome to Chechnya.’ Shielding Identities Of LGBT Refugees](#) (Deadline)
- Ricardo Prata Filho: [Technologies of Truth and the LGBTI+ Asylum Reality](#)
- Edwin Hodge: [Performing Borders: Queer & Trans Experiences at the Canadian Border](#)

Discussion Questions

1. In both films, moments of intimacy serve as a balm for our protagonists' hardships. Thinking about Marco first, how and when did Ahmed begin to feel like he belonged? What are the indications that he could trust someone? What about the rest of us?
2. What challenges to intimacy are present in that relationship? Specifically, what do we make of Omar's reactions and action at the very end of the short film?
 - a. How might Ahmed's definition of intimacy differ from that of Omar's?
 - b. How does that reflect their positionality in the world?
 - c. Did Omar live up to his expression of "don't worry"? How might we better navigate the power dynamics that may be present in our own interactions with impacted folks?
3. Thinking about expectations we place on people, we wanted to know – what did we make of Maxim's press conference in Welcome to Chechnya and this model of activism where Maxim emerges as this spokesperson for a whole cause?
 - a. Point out that Maxim isn't even Chechan. But also, what impact does this model of activism have on the spokesperson himself?
4. We wanted to turn our attention to the filmmaking of Welcome to Chechnya, as well as the responsibility of an artist in making this kind of impact-oriented, activist art. Firstly, Welcome to Chechnya is by no means a light film – did we feel like the violence portrayed throughout was necessary? What was, and what may not have been (if at all)?
5. Throughout the film, there were moments when the story tries to universalize the situation, where certain activists or people involved would say lines like "you know what else I want to tell you: it was not because of the county, it's because of the people. it happens in every country, someone gets power and starts abusing it" or "it's difficult to be a refugee no matter where you are." How universal was this story, and are there limits to how much we can universalize?
6. What did we make of the use of deepfake technology here? Does all the coverage of deepfake take away from the human rights issue at hand? Do we feel like everyone on set was safe?
7. There is a specific impact campaign around the film, with four specific goals. We'll give everyone a moment to read through the goals, but does the film call you to move or act upon these goals?
 - a. Do we feel like Welcome to Chechnya moves us in a direction of saviorism or solidarity? What is the difference between these two modes of relation?
 - b. Bringing Marco back into the conversation: how does 'saviorism' or concepts of homonationalism get complicated by our identity? Both Omar and Ahmed are queer migrants, but was solidarity built there?
 - c. What might we crave in a film that is imbued with more solidarity at its heart?

Session 2: Queer Citizenship & Belonging

Films: *Tinta Bruta* (2018, dir. Filipe Matzembacher), *Ife* (2020, dir. Uyaiedu Ikpe-Etim)

- ****Content Warning for *Tinta Bruta*: some graphic violence**

"I'm on the side of people's survival, and if people's optimism is attached to things like the state, I want to know what the state stands in for ... That's why I started working on citizenship in the first place, not because I loved it, but because I saw that people saw it as a state where they could imagine being collective, and being willing to be collective in ways that were also inconvenient." – Lauren Berlant

As queer theorist and literary scholar Lauren Berlant points out, citizenship is a fiction – but a useful fiction, in that so many people frame their lives around national belonging. In this session, we will interrogate the limits of “belonging” as often described in heteronormative terms. In *Tinta Bruta* and *Ife*, the protagonists are not migrating across literal borders. Instead, they negotiate the emotional, cultural, economic, and legal barriers set up to exclude queer folks in their homelands and in the places they escape to. As part of *Tinta Bruta* occurs in the drama of virtual performance spaces, we will also consider what queer belonging may look like online.

Resources:

On Queer Migrants x Digital Spaces:

- Lukasz Szulc: [Queer Migrants and Digital Culture](#)
- Andrew DJ Shield: [Gay Immigrants and Grindr Revitalizing Queer Urban Spaces](#)
- Rohit Dasgupta: [Dissident Citizenship, Belonging, Queerness in Digital Spaces](#)
- Ximena Keogh Serrano: [Dreaming a Radical Citizenship: How Undocumented Queers in the U.S. Configure Sites of Belonging and Being Through Art and Media Technologies](#)
- Krista Lynes: [Between Rock and Hard Place: Performative Politics & Queer Migrant Activisms](#)
- [LGBTQ Game Archive](#)

On Queer Belonging:

- Audre Lorde: [Uses of the Erotic](#)
- Lauren Berlant: [Queer Nationality](#)
- Amy Brandzel: [Queering Citizenship](#)
- Karma Chavez: [Queer Migration Politics, Ch. 2: Coalitional Possibility of Radical Interactionality](#)
- Sandibel Borges: [Not Coming Out, but Building Home: Queer Migrant Home](#)
- Adi Kuntsman: [Queerness as Europeanness: Immigration, Orientalist Visions, and Racialized Encounters in Israel/Palestine](#) (If you prefer, listen to Adi speak on this [here](#).)
- Mia Liinason: [Challenging the Visibility Paradigm: Tracing Ambivalences in Lesbian Migrant Women's Negotiations of Sexual Identity](#)
- Xavier Livermon: [Queer\(y\)ing Freedom: Black Queer Visibilities in Postapartheid South Africa](#)
- Susan Holland-Muller: [Making Place, Making Home: Lesbian Queer World-Making in Cape Town](#)
- Frey Kwa Hawking: [Queer Migrant Takeover](#)

Discussion Questions

1. In *Tinta Bruta*, the legal system serves as the oppressive backdrop to Pedro's life, by policing only certain violences. In what ways is Pedro's character a product of the failures of legal and social systems around him?
 - a. More broadly, how does victim-blaming and shaming function as a playground for heteronormativity. How and when do queer folks & migrants police ourselves due to these systems?
2. On the topic of intimacy: How well do we know Pedro? What questions are we left with to understand Pedro better?
 - a. Where does Pedro belong? Do we think he wants to belong?
 - b. What are his own beliefs for himself?
 - c. How do we achieve this level of intimacy with other people and truly understand their lack of belonging beyond labeling them as social recluses?
3. Pedro says: "Neonboy is the most important thing I have and I won't let anyone put him at risk." In many ways, Pedro turns to sex work as a means of survival, but he also finds Leo and a world where he is able to "be" in a much different way than he can in reality. Especially in light of the pandemic, platforms like OnlyFans and online dating/hookup apps have exploded in their popularity and use.
 - a. How can these spaces create avenues for belonging?
 - b. What are the different ways we believe these spaces may be used?
 - c. What is sex "work"? When there is money involved, what types of relationships are being built by each individual in that relationship? More specifically, when financial security is at the heart of it, as it is for Pedro, how do we interact with people in these platforms – or off? How might we avoid saviorism?
 - d. How might queerness – especially the fear that may be laden in being queer in certain contexts – complicate this?
4. Both films operate in worlds that are distinct from reality in some way. Pedro's life is mediated through screens until the very end; Ife and Adaora exist on a three-day date, closed off from the rest of the world. Both worlds shatter when the character must face the systemic reality of their situation. As people who create our own worlds and find our own communities, what function do these separate worlds serve for their citizens if they are not their/our full lived experiences?
 - a. Do we think these worlds ought to be bridged more with reality to survive? Should they be separate? Why / why not?
5. Both filmmakers work in different contexts with characters spanning class, circumstances, etc. – and for us, we find it important to interrogate and wonder why a filmmaker is making this film. What is the filmmaker saying about the ways in which we belong?
 - a. What are the limits of lesbianism as Ife presents it over the course of the film?
 - b. What do we make of the ending of *Tinta Bruta*, when Pedro dances alone?

Session 3: Queer Diasporic Families

Films: *A Dog Barking at the Moon* (2019, dir. Lisa Zi Xiang), *Halwa* (2018, dir. Gayatri Bajpal & Nirav Bhakta), *Sambal Belacan in San Francisco* (1997, dir. Madeleine Lim)

- ***Content Warning for Halwa: interpersonal abuse; Content Warning for A Dog Barking at the Moon: verbal abuse*

In this session, we turn from the systemic to the intimate and interpersonal, by questioning both the sacredness of the nuclear family and the possibilities of chosen ones. The three films this week are framed around the Asian diasporic family at three different phases of life and growth, and we will use them as jumping off points to explore: What cultural “blood”lines, if any, exist in the queer diaspora? What is left unspoken and unaddressed in families, queer or otherwise? Do queer migrants reproduce? How do we build authentic, caring relationships, and what factors must we consider in this re/building?

Resources:

- Martin Manalansan IV: [Queer Intersections: Sexuality and Gender in Migration Studies](#)
- Martin Manalansan IV: [Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora, Introduction](#)
- Peter Jackson: [Global Queering: Thai \[Trans\]genders and \[Homo\]sexualities in World History](#)
- Chandan Reddy: [Asian Diasporas, Neoliberalism, and Family](#)
- Carlos Ulises Decena: [Tacit Subjects](#)
- Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley: [Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of Middle Passage](#)
- Ajamu X: [Love & Lubrication in the Archives, or rukus!: A Black Queer Archive for the UK](#)
- Toxic Lesbians: [When Love in Africa costs your life](#)
- Disquiet: [African, migrant, and LGBTQ: What's it like to be Limit\(less\)?](#)
- Gayatri Gopinath: *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*
 - [Video Talk \(2015\)](#) | [Chapter 1 of her book](#) | [Podcast Version](#)
- Andrew Thomas Huang, *Out: These 7 Photos Reimagine the Queer Chinese Diaspora*
- Pahole Sookasikon: [Bangkok is Burning: Queer Cultural Productions of Thainess in Diaspora](#)
- Abigail Ocobock, *Slate*: [The Price of Equality: Softening of Radical Queer Politics](#)
- Catherine Baker: [Shelter in Place: The Feminist And Queer Insecurities of 'Home'](#)
- Catherine Chen, *AAWW*: [The Poetry of Chosen Families](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What were our initial reactions and judgments around the characters?
2. What did each character need from one another? What might this tell us about the types of family structures they are living within?
3. *Belonging* has been a recurring theme in all the films we have watched so far. How did our ideas and definitions of belonging rub up against the characters? What were their goals? DO they have goals?
4. What are the possibilities and the dangers of each character's nostalgia?
5. In *A Dog Barking at the Moon*, what happens in the ending scene? What was Jiumei's revelation for herself? What happens when she says it out loud to Xiaoyu?
6. What are the films' stances on patriarchy?
7. For all the women across all three films, what do stepping into their truth + expressing themselves look like? Even in the worlds where they may not fit, how do the characters gather empowerment?
 - a. How do these characters express their needs, who fulfills them (if fulfilled at all)?
8. What are the assumptions that we make about accountability within certain family structures? What holds us accountable in the context of family? How do we create these structures and systems for ourselves?

Session 4: Queer Aesthetics & Representations

Films: *The River* (1997, dir. Tsai Ming Liang)

OPTIONAL: *Invisible Life* (2018, dir. Karim Ainouz), *Excerpts* by Wu Tsang (2012, 2016)

Can there be a queer film without queer categories? What is a queer film, and what does a queer film look like, if anything? In this fourth session, we'll take a brief break from talking about the core topic of queer migration through a sociological lens, and instead take an aesthetic perspective. How does queer art look back at (and give a big middle finger to) institutions and the world, and what tools can we adopt as we create and make art for ourselves and for our own communities? The additional resources for this session open up our definitions of queerness while expanding our horizon of queer art beyond film.

Resources:

- Sara Ahmed: [Queer Phenomenology, Ch. 3: Sexual Orientation](#)
- Susan Sontag: "[Notes on 'Camp'](#)" in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics & Performing Subjects*
- Karl Schoonover: [The worlds of queer cinema: from aesthetics to activism](#)
- Dana Luciano: "[Nostalgia for an Age Yet to Come: Velvet Goldmine's Queer Archive](#)"
- B. Ruby Rich: [New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut](#), Ch. 4: What's a Good Gay Film? and Ch. 17: A Queer and Present Danger: The Death of New Queer Cinema
- Judith Halberstam: [In Queer Time & Place](#), Introduction
- Lee Edelman: [The Future is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive](#)
- Richard Fung: [Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn](#) (1991)
- Alex Greenberger, ARTnews: [Wu Tsang's Art Questions Everything We Know about Identity](#)
- Roger Hallas: [Reframing Bodies: AIDS, Bearing Witness, the Queer Moving Image](#), Introduction
- D.A. Miller: [Anal Rope](#)
- Cael Keegan: [Tongues without Bodies: The Wachowskis' Sense8 \(CV\)](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What is the motif of the river doing in the film? Perhaps one way to enter this question is to think: where does the river appear?
2. In the first 30 minutes of the film, the identities and relationships of the characters are largely kept concealed. Why do you think the director may have chosen to do this? What is the effect of this slow unraveling of these characters?
 - a. Similarly, what is the effect of a film that is sparse in dialogue like *The River*?
3. What is the line between sexuality and intimacy as presented in the film? What role does “sex” play in the film for each of the characters, and what doesn’t it provide?
4. What is the effect of the open ending? What happens to the familial relationship?
5. Why even bother having all these conversations? Why is it (or is it not) important to consider the visual form of the film?
6. What is “queer cinema”? How do we define / view it? What isn’t it?
7. We were interested in including Wu Tsang’s excerpts to explore a few other forms. We’d love to hear reactions to these excerpts, but also: what comparisons and connections can we make between all that we’ve watched so far? What is queer about the ways previous films were presented to us?
 - a. For example, *Welcome to Chechnya* vs *Wildness*? All the different fiction/autofiction we’ve seen?
8. As consumers (or as creators), what can we borrow from the form of queer film in way we move about the world or watch film?

Session 5: Trans-ing Migration

Films: *Call Her Ganda* (2019, dir. PJ Raval), *Kelet* (2020, dir. Susani Mahadura)

- **Content Warning for *Call Her Ganda*: misgendering, depictions of transphobic violence

Trans women of color continue to lead the efforts toward liberation, and this is no exception in the global arena. Just as we take *queer* as an analytical framework, *trans-ing* is “the practice that assembles gender into contingent structures of association with other attributes of bodily being, and that allows for their reassembly. Transing can function as a disciplinary tool ... It can also function as an escape vector, a line of flight, or pathway toward liberation” (Stryker, Currah and Moore 2008). Through *Kelet* and *Call Her Ganda*, we investigate how trans-ness and trans folks provide a unique lens of imperialism, neocolonialism, structural racism, and predatory globalization – and how they maintain their joy and hope in spite of it all.

Resources:

- Trystan Cotten: [Transgender Migrations: Bodies, Borders, Politics of Transition](#)
- Nael Bhanji: [Trans/scriptions: Homing Desires, \(Trans\)sexual Citizenship and Racialized Bodies](#)
- Aren Aizura: [Of borders and homes: the imaginary community of \(trans\)sexual citizenship](#)
- Rachel Presley: [Toward a Trans Sovereignty: Why We Need Indigenous Rhetorics to Decolonize Gender and Sexuality](#)
- Kale Fajardo: [Transportation: Translating Filipino and Filipino American Tomboy Masculinities through Global Migration and Seafaring](#)
- Toby Beauchamp: [Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11](#)
- Gary Kinsman & Dan Irving: [Trans Politics & Anti Capitalism](#)
- Che Gossett, *LA Review of Books*: [Žižek’s Trans/gender Trouble](#)
- C. Riley Snorton: [“DeVine’s Cut: Public Memory and the Politics of Martyrdom](#)
- Trans Equality: [Our Moment for Reform: Immigration and Transgender People](#)
- Ezra Young: [Demarginalizing Trans Rights](#)

This week, we also talked to PJ Raval, the director of *Call Her Ganda!* These were our questions:

1. What kind of interactions/conversations did you have with the main protagonists prior to and during the film? For example, what was the genesis of Meredith's involvement in the film / did you chat with Meredith about their perspective as a journalist covering this kind of story?
2. What was on your mind as you balanced honoring Ganda's story with all the historical/archival/ background information on the larger social forces?
3. What were you setting out to do? As a filmmaker based in the U.S., what were you trying to achieve by telling this story? (Media attention, family, identity, etc.)
 - a. How did the opportunity arise to tell this story?
4. As a Filipino-American, how did that affect your approach (and your responsibility) in making this film? Did identity as a Filipino-American director affect trust / access with different people in the film?
5. Could you talk more about your visual choices & intentions to represent and remember Jennifer, especially balancing the trauma of her death with her family / etc.? Could you talk about your responsibility and care toward your audience in making this film?

Discussion Questions

1. What do we make of the storytelling choices in *Kelet*, especially as a film that doesn't blatantly call out racism and explore it in a pedantic/overwrought way?
2. What is the effect of watching *Kelet* just *live*? Where do we get our ideas of success or importance from?
3. Comparing these two films: how does the person telling the story and the life/death status of the protagonist affect the storytelling, especially considering the significance of archive for queer folks? How do we stay true to a queer archive?
4. How does a show like *Pose* differ from these two documentaries, also about trans performers and sex workers?

Session 6: A Queer Migrant's Liberation

Films: *She's Not a Boy* (2019, dir. Yuhong Pang & Robert Tokanel), *No Hard Feelings* (dir. Faraz Shariat)

What comes next? What futures are waiting for us to act? In this final session, we will turn our attention to joy, love, and youthfulness as values to enact in our own actions. We will use this session to tie together various threads from throughout the entire series and explore how our collective knowledge can mobilize us to do something crazy, fun, impactful, and meaningful for queer migrants and for us. How do we transform relationships and our social justice education into a future where queer migrants are free – to move, to love, to be?

Resources:

- Achille Mbembe: [The Idea of a Borderless World](#)
- Kara Keeling: [Queer Times, Black Futures](#)
- Philip Ayoub & Lauren Bauman: [Migration and Queer Mobilizations: how migration facilitates cross-border LGBTQ activism](#)
- Ruben Zecena: [Migrating Like a Queen: Visuality and Performance in the Trans Gay Caravan](#)
- Melissa Autumn White: [Documenting the undocumented: Toward a queer politics of no borders](#)
- Rahul Rao: [Echoes of Imperialism in LGBT Activism](#)
- Thomas Baudinette: [Creative Misreadings of "Thai BL" by a Filipino Fan Community: Dislocating Knowledge Production in Transnational Queer Fandoms Through Aspirational Consumption](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do we make of the ways the personal & the political blended together in *No Hard Feelings*? What worked (or did not work)?
2. Who was this film produced for, as in the intended audience? How do we know?
 - a. What makes for a queer film, and what moments made it clear for you?
3. What do we make of the ending of the film, from the moment Banafshe's deportation is announced? There is a clear break in the form and mood of the film – why, and what effect does it have on the plotline and on your takeaways from the film?
4. What have these stories, across all six sessions, taught us about the global connections that bind us and the conditions that separate us?
5. What are the connections between the queer films that we've watched thus far?
 - a. What makes a queer canon, and what might work we do (as creators, as consumers) to uplift this canon?